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ALLEGIANCES

TUNNELCLAN

LEADER Fallen Path – white tom with ginger patches and green eyes

MEDICINE CAT Ginger River – ginger tom with yellow eyes, former kittypet that lived with Twolegs that grows herbs

Softpaw, Shadow Leaves

SHARPCLAWS Holly Fall – black she-cat with green eyes

Softpaw, Autumn Leaves

Heart Willow – grey she-cat with blue eyes, former rogue

Softpaw, Holly Leaves

SOFTPAWS Autumn Leaves – white she-cat with ginger and black patches and amber eyes

Holly Leaves – black she-cat with ginger patches and green eyes

Shadow Leaves – white tom with black patches and green eyes, softpawed to the medicine cat

WINDCLAN

LEADER Onestar – small light brown tabby tom

DEPUTY Harespring – brown-and-white tom

MEDICINE CAT Kestrelflight

WARRIORS Whitetail – white she-cat

Nightcloud – black she-cat with amber eyes

Crowfeather – very dark grey, almost black, tom with blue eyes

Breezepelt – black tom with amber eyes

Heathertail – light brown tabby she-cat with smoky-blue eyes

Pigeonwing – white tom with ginger patches and blue eyes

QUEENS Echodawn – grey she-cat with darker flecks and amber eyes, mothering Hollykit (dark grey, almost black, she-kit with green eyes), Eveningkit (grey she-kit with pale brown patches and amber eyes) and Tunnelkit (dark brown tom-kit and blue eyes)

THUDNERCLAN

LEADER Bramblestar – dark brown tabby tom

DEPUTY Squirrelflight – dark ginger she-cat with one white paw

MEDICINE CATS Leafpool – light brown tabby she-cat with amber eyes, white chest and paws

Jayfeather – grey tabby tom with blind blue eyes

WARRIORS Thornclaw – golden-brown tabby tom

Lionblaze – golden-brown tabby tom with amber eyes

Cloudtail – white tom

Sandstorm – pale ginger she-cat

Greystripe – grey tom

Mousewhisker – grey-and-white tom

Hazeltail – grey-and-white she-cat

Berrynose – cream-coloured tom with a stumpy tail

Brackenfur – golden-brown tabby tom

Cinderheart – grey tabby she-cat

Blossomfall – tortoiseshell-and-white she-cat

Bumblestripe – very pale grey tom with a black stripe going from his nose to his tail

Dovewing – pale smoky-grey she-cat with blue eyes

Ivypool – silver-and-white tabby she-cat

Cherryfall – ginger she-cat with amber eyes

QUEENS Daisy – cream-coloured she-cat with ice-blue eyes and a fluffy tail

Lilyheart – small dark tabby she-cat with white patches and blue eyes

ELDERS Purdy – dark brown tabby tom with amber eyes

RIVERCLAN

LEADER Mistystar – blue-grey she-cat with ice-blue eyes

DEPUTY Reedwhisker – black tom with dark grey eyes

MEDICINE CATS Mothwing – golden tabby she-cat with amber eyes

Willowshine – dark grey tabby she-cat with green eyes

WARRIORS Mintfur – light grey tabby tom

Duskfur – brown tabby she-cat

QUEENS Lakeheart – grey tabby she-cat

ELDERS Mosspelt – tortoiseshell she-cat

SHADOWCLAN

LEADER Blackstar – large white tom with jet-black paws

DEPUTY Rowanclaw – dark ginger tom with green eyes

MEDICINE CAT Littlecloud – light brown tabby tom with blue eyes

WARRIORS Tawnypelt – pale tortoiseshell she-cat with green eyes

Stonewing – white tom

Dawnpelt – cream-furred she-cat

QUEENS Grassheart – pale brown tabby she-cat

Prologue

A white tom with ginger patches chased a rabbit across the moor, his blue eyes fearful that he wouldn't catch it. It was leaf-bare and prey was scares, so he needed to catch the rabbit for his mates and kits. He kicked up his speed and he pounced, killing the rabbit neatly and cleanly. The blue-eyed WindClan tom picked up the rabbit and began to pad back to camp as snow fell.

. . .

The ginger-patched tom carried the rabbit into the nursery, his mate, Echodawn, lay in there with her tail wrapped around his kits.

"Can I see them, Echodawn?" he asked his mate.

"Okay, Pigeonwing, you've waited long enough," Echodawn moved her tail to reveal the kits.

There was a dark grey, almost black, she-kit with green eyes, Eveningkit a grey she-kit with pale brown patches and amber eyes and green eyes and a dark brown tom-kit and blue eyes. Pigeonwing stared at them in silence.

"I've already named the she-kits," Echodawn broke the silence. "The dark grey one is Hollykit and the grey she-kit with pale brown patches is Eveningkit. I wanted you to name your son."

Pigeonwing looked at his son again, then remember what Holly Fall had told him the last time they'd met.

"Tunnelkit," Pigeonwing decided. "His name is Tunnelkit."

"Yes, I love you, Pigeonwing," Echodawn whispered. "I always have."

"I know you have. And I always will."

Chapter 1

Holly Leaves shuffled her paws excitedly, she and her littermates were going to become softpaws!

"Let all of TunnelClan gather at the Tunnel Ledge for a Clan meeting!" Fallen Path howled. "Today, my children are going to become softpaws! Autumn Leaves, Shadow Leaves and Holly Leaves, you have all reached the age of six moons and it is time for you to become softpaws. Autumn Leaves, you are now a softpaw and your mentor will be Holly Fall. Holly Leaves, you are now a softpaw and your mentor will be Heart Willow. Shadow Leaves, you are now a softpaw and – since you have asked to be a medicine cat – your mentor will be Ginger River."

"Autumn Leaves! Holly Leaves! Shadow Leaves! Autumn Leaves! Holly Leaves! Shadow Leaves! Autumn Leaves! Holly Leaves! Shadow Leaves!"

"Shadow Leaves, you and Ginger River will check the herb sorts. Autumn Leaves, you and Holly Fall will go hunting. Holly Leaves, you and Heart Willow will go check the main tunnel for intruders."

Holly Leaves jumped up and down with excitement, then stopped and felt her pelt burn with embarrassment.

"Sorry, Heart Willow," Holly Leaves mewed. "I'm just excited to check the tunnel."

"That's what being a TunnelClan cat is all about," Heart Willow replied. "It's okay, I was excited when Fallen Path took me to the tunnel."

"Okay, let's go!"

Willow Heart set off out of the camp-cavern, Holly Leaves followed. She couldn't wait to see the moor! Holly Leaves knew that WindClan lived on the moor and that she wasn't allowed on it but

she didn't care. Holly Leaves just wanted to see and smell the moor.

. . .

Once they got to the exit of the tunnel, Holly Leaves saw an unfamiliar cat coming in.

"Heart Willow, look! An intruder!" Holly Leaves was excited, an intruder!

"Wait, Holly---" Heart Willow began but Holly Leaves was already running up to attack the intruder.

Holly Leaves jumped onto the intruder – a white tom with ginger patches and blue eyes – he looked scared.

"W-What are you doing?" the tom asked.

"You're an intruder, you're intruding on TunnelClan territory!" Holly Leaves sunk her claws into the intruder's pelt. "I have to protect my Clan."

"But I'm here to visit my brother!"

"Likely story, I bet every intruder says that!"

"Wait, Holly Leaves!" Heart Willow finally caught up with them. "That is Pigeonwing, he is welcome."

"Oh... oh!" Holly Leaves sheltered her claws and jumped off Pigeonwing. "Sorry, I hurt my kin."

"It's okay," Pigeonwing replied. "But I need cobwebs now for the faint bleeding."

"Well, since the main tunnel is safe," Heart Willow began. "We'll take you to Fallen Path."

"Thanks, Heart Willow."

Holly Leaves followed Heart Willow and Pigeonwing back through the main tunnel.

"I'm really sorry," Holly Leaves repeated. "I hurt you and you're my kin."

"So you're Holly Leaves," Pigeonwing meowed. "Don't you remember me? I visited last moon."

"I'm sorry, I don't. I was a kit then... but I'm a softpaw now!"

"A softpaw... oh, you mean an apprentice?"

"Is that what you surface Clan cats call a softpaw? What do you call a sharpclaw?"

"A sharpclaw... hmm. A warrior."

"Medicine cat?"

"Medicine cat."

"You two, be quiet," Heart Willow hissed. "Do you want to cause a cave-in?"

"No," Holly Leaves squeaked quietly.

Chapter 2

"What herb is this?" Shadow Leaves nosed a fuzzy leaf.

"That's borage," Ginger River replied. "It helps a queen make more milk for her kits."

"What about this long-stemmed plant with short leaves?"

"That is parsley, if a queen eats it, they're milk will slow down or stop. Used for if a queen's kits have died or don't need milk."

"Why was Mother eating them when we still needed milk?"

"Because she had too much milk."

"Oh."

Shadow Leaves saw Heart Willow coming out of the main tunnel, behind her was Holly Leaves and a stranger.

"Holly Leaves, who is that?" Shadow Leaves asked his sister.

"This is Pigeonwing," Holly Leaves replied.

"You mean, Fallen Path's brother?"

"Yes."

"And you're bleeding!" Ginger River fretted, gathering cobwebs and dashed over to Pigeonwing.

"Yes, yes I am," Pigeonwing replied. "But it isn't as bad that gash I got when I was fighting RiverClan."

"That was pretty bad."

"Brother!" Fallen Path called from Tunnel Ledge. "It's good to see you."

"It's good to see you too, Fallen Path," Pigeonwing replied.

"How is Echodawn?"

"She's great and beautiful as always. And she's had the kits. She had them when I was hunting after I left last time."

"What are their names?"

"Shouldn't we wait for Holly Fall and...?" Pigeonwing looked around. "Autumn Leaves to come back?"

"No, they're out hunting and I assume you need to go soon."

"Oh, I was hoping to see how big Autumn Leaves was."

"She's as big as Holly Leaves."

"Well, there's Hollykit – she's a dark grey she-kit with green eyes," Pigeonwing began. "And Eveningkit, a grey she-kit with pale brown patches and amber eyes and Tunnelkit, a dark brown tom-kit with blue eyes."

"Thanks, it was good to see you, brother," Fallen Path replied. "When those kits become apprentices, bring them in."

"I'll try. Maybe Echodawn will come next time."

"I'm sure Holly Fall would like that, I'll make sure Holly Fall is here."

"I'd better go now, I have mouths to feed at home!"

"Okay, bye, brother."

Pigeonwing began to pad away, he looked over his shoulder and meowed: "Bye, brother, see you soon."

Chapter 3

Autumn Leaves watched Holly Fall stalking a mouse, her body down and compact. Her mother pounced and killed the mouse cleanly and neatly.

"Wow, you did great!" Autumn Leaves mewed. "Better than mine," she pawed her mouse, it had been killed but not that clean or neat.

"It's okay," Holly Fall encouraged. "My first mouse was worse than that."

"It was?"

"Yes, it was, Autumn Leaves."

"Should we continue hunting?"

"Yes, we need at least one more mouse.'"

. . .

Autumn Leaves carried two mice back to the cavern-camp, Holly Fall carried another mouse and two voles. Leaf-bare was treating them well.

Once they got back to camp, Holly Fall placed the mouse and voles in the middle of the cavern-camp. Autumn Leaves did the same.

"Fallen Path, has Pigeonwing been here?" Holly Fall asked her mate.

"Yes, he was here a while ago," Fallen Path replied. "Echodawn had her kits. Hollykit, Eveningkit and Tunnelkit."

"Those are great names."

"I'm guessing Echodawn named Hollykit and Eveningkit. And that Pigeonwing named Tunnelkit."

"I wish they could bring them in."

"Pigeonwing says that he'll try when they're apprentices."

Autumn Leaves padded up to Holly Leaves.

"Did you see Pigeonwing?" she asked.

"Yes," her sister replied.

"What did he look like?"

"He looks just like Father, expect---"

"He has blue eyes," Shadow Leaves interrupted.

"Would you not interrupt me, Shadow Leaves, but he does have blue eyes."

"I wish I had of seen him," Autumn Leaves mewed.

"He was asking about you, Autumn Leaves," Fallen Path put in.

"He was?"

"Yes, he wanted to know how big you were."

"What did you say, Father?"

"I said that you were as big as Holly Leaves."

Chapter 4

"Autumn Leaves, you will be hunting by yourself today," Holly Fall ordered.

"Okay, Mother, I won't let you down!" Autumn Leaves mewed.

"I'm sure you won't."

Autumn Leaves dashed off, she would make her mother proud! *I'll catch so much prey, Mother will praise me! And Father will do so too, I'll be their favourite kit!*

. . .

Autumn Leaves scented the air, all she could scent was the tunnel's damp atmosphere. But then, she saw a squirrel! Autumn Leaves chased the squirrel through the tunnels, this squirrel was lovely and fat – not that common in leaf-bare, but since new-leaf was around the corner. Prey was getter fatter! The squirrel ran out of the tunnels, Autumn Leaves knew that she wasn't allowed out there but that squirrel was worth such a good praise... *um*, was too fat to loose. The ginger-and-black patched she-cat decided to follow the squirrel out of the tunnels and into... the forest?

Autumn Leaves thought that that tunnel lead to the moor – WindClan territory – but it didn't it lead to the moor, instead it lead to... what was the forest Clan called? Oh right, *Thunder*Clan. She ran after the squirrel, which seemed to be losing energy as it was slowing down. Once Autumn Leaves caught the squirrel with a clean bite, she picked it up and began to walk back to the entry of the tunnels.

Autumn Leaves was almost about to walk into the tunnels when: "Halt, prey-stealer!"

Autumn Leaves stopped and turned around to see a large grey-and-white tom, his green gazed burned her pelt.

"Where are you taking that squirrel?" he asked.

"To my family..." Autumn Leaves paused, then dipped her head. "I'm Autumn Leaves, by the way."

"Mousewhisker. But I'm sorry, you can't take that squirrel. It's a ThunderClan squirrel."

"I'm sorry but my family and friends are very few, this squirrel could feed half of us."

"This is leaf-bare, we can't spare prey to puny apprentices' families."

"Leaf-bare is almost over and I'm a softpaw, not an apprentice."

Mousewhisker stopped, after a few seconds he dipped his head.

"Go, Autumn Leaves," he ordered. "Take the squirrel."

"But---" Autumn Leaves began.

"Just go! Go before I change my mind."

Autumn Leaves quickly dashed into the tunnels, something about that ThunderClan cat felt strange... *what's about that cat that makes me feel strange?*

Chapter 5

Shadow Leaves stared at Ginger River in a confused way.

"What are you confused about now?" Ginger River asked.

"It's just," Shadow Leave began. "The medicine cat is next in line to become leader after the leader dies and the medicine cat's softpaw is next in line to become medicine cat... is the medicine cat's softpaw the second cat in line to become leader?"

"Yes."

"Also, the leader is allowed to have kits but the medicine cat can't have kits until they have a full trained apprentice."

"Yes, that is correct."

"Then when can I have kits?"

"When you have a full trained apprentice."

"That is confusing!"

"It may be confusing but those are the rules that Fallen Path and Holly Fall made when they founded TunnelClan."

"Okay..." Shadow Leaves replied. "I have one more question."

Ginger River rolled his eyes. "What is it?" he asked.

"Why wasn't Holly Fall made medicine cat?"

. . .

Shadow Leaves sorted the borage from the parsley, he didn't know why Ginger River had mixed them all up. The black-patched tom watched his sisters return from hunting – coming back from different tunnels. Autumn Leaves always looked moony and tired

and always smelled like damp ferns every time she returned from hunting. Holly Leaves always returned smelling normally and always ready to moan about coming five nose-lengths from something but missed it.

"I can't wait to become a sharpclaw!" Holly Leaves mewed instead of moaning about how bad her hunting was.

"Me neither," Autumn Leaves agreed sleepily. "Three moons remaining."

Chapter 6

Holly Leaves slept next to her sister, moonlight pooled into the cavern-camp from the hole in the roof. Suddenly, Holly Leaves felt Autumn Leaves shift from her nest. Holly Leaves opened her eyes and saw Autumn Leaves leaving out of the tunnel that went to the forest. *Where is Autumn Leaves going?* Holly Leaves, unable to sleep because of curiosity, quietly followed her sister through the dark tunnel.

Holly Leaves wondered if Autumn Leaves was just going for a late-night hunt... but why would she leave so quietly? Surely she would tell some cat before leaving. Maybe this would explain why Autumn Leaves was always so tired in the morning? And why she always looked so moony all the time?

. . .

Holly Leaves stuck her head out of the exit of the tunnels, she gasped quietly when she saw who Autumn Leaves was with.

"A *ThunderClan* cat!" Holly Leaves snarled stomping over to Autumn Leaves and the ThunderClan tom. "Why are you hanging out with a *ThunderClan* cat?!"

"I'm sorry, Mousewhisker, but it seems I have to go now," Autumn Leaves meowed. "My sister wants me."

"Sure, Autumn Leaves, I'd better get going anyway," the grey-and-white ThunderClan tom replied. "I'm on the dawn patrol."

After Mousewhisker left, Holly Leaves stomped up to her sister.

"What are you *thinking*?" Holly Leaves demanded. "You know how we have to keep our little Clan a secret!"

"I know but Mousewhisker won't tell any cat," Autumn Leaves replied bluntly. "He promised me."

"And you think a promise of a *stranger* is going to keep our little Clan safe?"

"Mousewhisker isn't a stranger! He's a friend."

"How can you be sure, Autumn Leaves?" Holly Leaves paused and gasped. "You're in love with him! So that's why you've been so tired all the time and moony?"

"Yes, he's a great cat."

"You must stop seeing him!"

"Why? When I'm a sharpclaw, I can give our Clan more members."

"What if they find *out*?"

"No cat will find out."

"How can you be sure I won't tell them?"

Autumn Leaves gasped. "You wouldn't! You couldn't!"

"I won't... *if* you give him up," Holly Leaves taunted.

Chapter 7

Autumn Leaves stared at her sister in disbelief.

"Please, I love him!" Autumn Leaves pleaded. "And he loves me!"

Holly Leaves stared at Autumn Leaves – her eyes filled with pain – for a few seconds, then sighed.

"Fine, you can keep the tom," Holly Leaves signed. "But please be sensible!"

"I will," Autumn Leaves vowed. "I promise."

. . .

A moon passed and Autumn Leaves jumped with joy as she saw Pigeonwing, Echodawn and three other cats that she didn't know.

"Pigeonwing! Echodawn! Look how big I am now!" Autumn Leaves mewed running up to them. "Who are they?"

"They're our kits," Pigeonwing replied.

"We're 'paws now!" the dark brown tom growled. "I'm Tunnelpaw!"

"And I'm Hollypaw!" the dark grey she-cat mewed.

"Eveningpaw..." the grey she-cat with pale brown patches whispered.

"Nice to meet you all!" Autumn Leaves replied.

"How is tunnel-life?" Echodawn asked.

"'Tunnel-life' is great!" Autumn Leaves turned to see Holly Fall. "Good to see you, sister."

"It's nice to see you too."

"How is WindClan?"

"Same old. Same old."

"Nice."

"Where's Fallen Path?" Pigeonwing asked.

"I'm right here, brother," Fallen Path padded up to his brother and nosed him. "How are your kits' training going?"

"They're going well---"

"And we're 'paws!" Tunnelpaw growled again. "Stop calling us kits!"

"You'll always be your parents' kits, Tunnelpaw," Fallen Path mewed. "Even when your elders and they're in StarClan watching over you."

"But we're 'paws! We should be called 'paws!"

Echodawn rolled her eyes. "Apprentices!" she muttered.

"Finally!"

"Well, it is time you met the others," Fallen Path meowed. "Come on, Tunnelpaw, Eveningpaw and Hollypaw, come and meet Holly Leaves and Shadow Leaves."

Autumn Leaves followed her father and the 'apprentices' back into the cavern-camp. Shadow Leaves was sorting herbs with Ginger River and Holly Leaves was putting fresh-kill on the pile with Heart Willow.

"Hello, Pigeonwing," Ginger River dipped his head. "These your kits?"

"We're---" Tunnelpaw was cut off by Pigeonwing's reply.

"Yes, and they're apprentices now."

"Well, this is Shadow Leaves," Ginger River told the apprentice and flicked his tail to his softpaw. "Say hi."

"Hi," Shadow Leaves mumbled. "Sorry, I'm busy."

"That's okay," Hollypaw replied. "I'm Hollypaw."

"Hi, Hollypaw, and I assume your sister is Eveningpaw?"

"That's right, don't worry if she doesn't talk to you... she's shy."

"Hi!" Holly Leaves mewed. "I'm Holly Leaves, nice to meet you, Eveningpaw."

"I, um... hi," Eveningpaw whispered, staring at Shadow Leaves.

"Now that you've met every cat, it's time we went home," Pigeonwing meowed.

"It was nice to meet you," Hollypaw mewed.

Chapter 8

"Holly Leaves, Autumn Leaves, it is time for your test to become sharpclaws!" Fallen Path howled from Tunnel Ledge. "Go into that tunnel, travel back through the tunnels and come back. When you return, you will be sharpclaws."

Shadow Leaves watches his sisters go into the tunnel next to Tunnel Ledge. He wondered how he would become a full medicine cat...

"Fallen Path, I'd like to speak," Ginger River dipped his head. "Please."

"If you must, Ginger River," Fallen Path replied.

"Cats of TunnelClan, I believe that my softpaw Shadow Leaves is ready to become a full medicine cat."

"Wow, really?" Shadow Leaves echoed.

"Yes, now, I hold you before StarClan. And may our warrior ancestors hear my call, Shadow Leaves, do you promise to heal and care for your Clanmates as if they were your own?"

"Yes, I do, Ginger River."

"Then by StarClan's power, I make you a full medicine cat!"

"Shadow Leaves! Shadow Leaves! Shadow Leaves!" every cat called out.

. . .

Shadow Leaves pawed a borage leaf nervously, Holly Leaves and Autumn Leaves hadn't returned yet. The black-patched tom was worried about his littermates, they had been gone for two days! He didn't want them to die as softpaws without gaining the sharpclaw status. *Please, StarClan, with all your power! Bring them home safely!*

"Look, they're coming!" Heart Willow mewed.

Shadow Leaves stopping pawing the leaf and jumped up to look into the tunnel, Heart Willow was right, Holly Leaves and Autumn Leaves were coming!

"They're here! They're here!" Heart Willow continued.

"Holly Leaves! Autumn Leaves! Holly Leaves! Autumn Leaves!"

"We're sharpclaws!" Autumn Leaves mewed when she and her sister got out. "Oh, it's good to see the cavern-camp again."

"Same," Holly Leaves agreed.

"Did you two eat when you were looking for the cavern-camp?" Fallen Path asked.

"No, I was too busy looking for the exit," Autumn Leaves replied. "Why? Is that bad?"

"No, it isn't bad," Fallen Path meowed. "You both may eat your first meal as sharpclaws."

"Thank you, Father," Holly Leaves replied as Autumn Leaves dipped her head.

Shadow Leaves watched his sisters go to the pile of fresh-kill, he went with them.

"Hello, Autumn Leaves, Holly Leaves," Shadow Leaves mewed. "I was made a full medicine cat!"

"Congrats," Autumn Leaves replied.

"Congrats on you both becoming sharpclaws."

"Thanks," Holly Leaves replied. "I hope we all make smart decisions as sharpclaws and full medicine cat."

. . .

Eveningpaw woke up, she was in WindClan camp and this was her

home... or was it? She shook herself, *yes, it is my home*, Eveningpaw thought. *At least, I hope it is.* No matter how many times the pale brown-patched she-cat repeated that this was her home, she couldn't get over the fact that Shadow Leaves intrigued her.

Eveningpaw sat up, every cat in WindClan was asleep. Why did her paws seem to want to pull her to TunnelClan? She got out of the apprentices' den and snuck out of camp. Eveningpaw remembered where the entrance to TunnelClan. She followed the two day old scent back to the cavern-camp.

"I'd like to join TunnelClan!" Eveningpaw mewed.

Chapter 9

Holly Leaves woke up, Autumn Leaves was gone... *what a surprise!* She thought.

"Eveningpaw?" Fallen Path echoed. "What are you doing here?"

"I've come to join TunnelClan!" Eveningpaw howled, she paused then whispered: "If you say I can."

"Of course, if you want to. You will become a softpaw right now!"

"Now?" echoed Heart Willow. "But it's the middle of the night!"

"Yes, now. Eveningpaw, you are now a softpaw and your new name is Evening Drop. Your mentor will be Heart Willow."

"Evening Drop! Evening Drop! Evening Drop!" every cat called out.

"Fine, I'll mentor her," Heart Willow muttered. "But we're not going anywhere until tomorrow!"

Holly Leaves licked her paw before going back to sleep.

. . .

Holly Leaves woke up, Autumn Leaves was next to her again. *Why do you have to go visit Mousewhisker so often?* She asked silently. *Well, at least she rolled in damp ferns to hide his scent. Now... what do I do as a sharpclaw?* She shrugged. *I'll ask Father.* Holly Leaves got up and padded over to her father, who was licking his paw and drawing it over his ear.

"Father?" Holly Leaves began.

"Yes, what is it, Holly Leaves?" Fallen Path asked.

"What am I doing today?"

"You could go collect herbs with Shadow Leaves..."

"I thought Evening Drop was doing that."

Fallen Path leaned forward and whispered: "I want you to follow them, Evening Drop is just a softpaw and you're a full trained sharpclaw."

"Okay, I'll follow them."

"Thank you, Holly Leaves."

. . .

Holly Leaves quickly and quietly followed Evening Drop and Shadow Leaves out of the tunnels and onto the moor. Hiding from them in the moor was quite hard since there weren't too many bushes and no trees. Holly Leaves was both relieved and nervous when the two other TunnelClan cats headed into Twolegplace. *Maybe they're just looking for catmint?* She wondered. *Or just some normal mint?*

Chapter 10

Autumn Leaves padded out of the dark tunnel and into the forest, she sat down. Mousewhisker would be here soon, hopefully. Suddenly she heard a patrol coming!

"Come on! I can smell the intruder, she's close," a ThunderClan tom growled. "We need to teach her to stay out of our territory!"

"But I already told you!" Autumn Leaves heard Mousewhisker's voice. "I asked her why she was here, she said she was lost. So I showed her to the border."

"Liar! She's been here every night for the past three moons, Mousewhisker, how do you explain that?"

Autumn Leaves held her breath, what was about to happen?

"I don't know why she'd been coming back," Mousewhisker admittedly lied.

"Well, just to be sure, we'll follow her scent," the tom meowed.

Autumn Leaves panicked and went into the tunnel entrance. The entrance to the tunnel was hidden very well, maybe they would be able to follow her scent in.

"Strange," the tom growled. "Her scent ends here and seems to disappear."

"We'll just tell Bramblestar that she left," Mousewhisker mewed, beginning to shuffle away.

"We'll tell him that her *scent* is here but she's gone."

"You both go ahead, I'll catch up. I need to... make dirt."

"Fine, but be back at camp by the time we're back."

After the patrol left, Autumn Leaves came out of the tunnels.

"What were you doing here?" Mousewhisker demanded. "I told you that I was on a patrol!"

"I wanted to see you again," Autumn Leaves replied coolly. "I love you."

"I know you love me but you can't pop and anywhere at any time. Tonight, we'll meet here, okay?"

"Okay."

"See you later, Autumn Leaves."

Autumn Leaves dipped her head before going back into the tunnel.

. . .

Autumn Leaves woke up and looked around, no cat was awake. She got out of her nest and padded out towards the forest tunnel. She made sure all that she could smell was the damp tunnel before she padded into the forest. The black-and-ginger patched she-cat sat down, looking for the grey-and-white fur of Mousewhisker. When she saw his green eyes, Autumn Leaves felt better.

"You came," Autumn Leaves dipped her head.

"Of course, I love you," Mousewhisker replied.

"And I do, too," the black-and-ginger patched she-cat leaned closer and whispered: "I want to have your kits."

"Are you sure? What would your father say?"

"My father wouldn't find out. He's mouse-brained enough to think Ginger River is the father."

"Isn't Ginger River your medicine cat?"

"Since he has a full trained apprentice, he can have kits."

"Strange."

"It might be strange you surface Clan cats, but it's our custom."

Mousewhisker took a deep breath. "I love you, you love me," he began. "But are you really ready to take a big step like that?"

Chapter 11

Evening Drop stared at panic, Heart Willow was having Ginger River's kits!

"Come on, Heart Willow, you can do it," Ginger River urged.

"I'm trying..." Heart Willow gasped for breath. "But it's hard!"

"I know it's hard but when you're done, we'll have beautiful kits of TunnelClan! Trust me, it'll be worth it."

"Okay, I believe you, Ginger--- ow!" Heart Willow shrieked as the first kit was coming out.

"Just relax. Evening Drop, can you get some wet moss for Heart Willow, please?"

"Sure, Ginger River," Evening Drop whispered and dashed off.

Evening Drop knew the only place to get moss was the river that bordered WindClan and ThunderClan territory. The pale brown-patched she-cat gulped as she knew it was dangerous, but she had to do it for her Tunnelmate!

. . .

Once Evening Drop got to the river, she was quite thirsty. When she was drinking the river-water, she heard a familiar voice from behind.

"Halt, trespasser!" it was Tunnelpaw.

Evening Drop turned around. "Nice to see you again, Tunnelpaw, you never visit us in the tunnels."

"Eveningpaw? You're alive! And I'm Tunnel*runner* now!"

"I'm Evening Drop, I'm a sharpclaw in TunnelClan now."

"But how could you leave? I thought WindClan was everything to you... and Pigeonwing and Echodawn never said that you were in TunnelClan."

"What? I may be hunting every time they're in the tunnels but surely Fallen Path would've mentioned me?"

"Nope."

Evening Drop felt heart-broken, her leader didn't tell her father that she was living in his Clan.

"Just tell our family that I'm alive, okay? No cat else."

"Sure, sister," Tunnelrunner dipped his head. "But why are you here?"

"Heart Willow was giving birth and Ginger River needed me to get moss."

"Fine, take the moss. Just go before a patrol comes, I'll deal with your scent."

Evening Drop gathered some wet moss and carried it in her mouth back to the tunnels.

Chapter 12

Shadow Leaves slept, the birth of Heart Willow's kit went well. Thought she only had one, Heart Willow loved him so much. The kit was grey with darker grey patches and blue eyes, so Heart Willow named him Cloudy Storm. Cloudy Storm was a feisty little kit as he would squirm all the time. Ginger River was proud to father such a handsome son.

"Cloudy Storm, go to sleep!" Heart Willow scolded. "You can play in the morning."

Cloudy Storm mumbled something too quiet to hear and went back to sleep. Shadow Leaves opened his eye and flicked his ear at Evening Drop, who winked back at him in a reply and closed her eyes. Shadow Leaves closed his eyes and went to sleep.

. . .

"Shadow Leaves," Ginger River began. "I have decided I don't want to be a medicine cat anymore, I'm becoming a sharpclaw. You are next in line to become leader."

"What? Are you sure?" Shadow Leaves echoed. "You love being a medicine cat! You've always loved herbs."

"Yes, but I love Heart Willow and Cloudy Storm more. I know I'm allowed to have kits now that I have a full trained apprentice but I want to put my kin first and I can't do that as a medicine cat, please respect my decision."

"Of course but I'll always look up to you."

"I know, now I'd better go hunting!"

Ginger River padded off. Shadow Leaves' heart shattered, he was hoping that since his former mentor had many moons left on him that Shadow Leaves would be able to quit to be with Evening Drop

but now that Ginger River quit... Shadow Leaves can't be with Evening Drop until he has a full trained apprentice. *No!* Shadow Leaves wailed silently. *I love Evening Drop!* Shadow Leaves decided to wake up Evening Drop to tell her that they couldn't be together now that Ginger River had become a sharpclaw.

"Evening Drop, I have to tell you something?" Shadow Leaves began.

"I have to tell you something, too, Shadow Leaves," Evening Drop mewed.

"Okay, you go first."

"I'm leaving."

"Why are you leaving?"

"I can't be in TunnelClan if I can't be with you, so I've decided to go back to WindClan."

"Are you sure WindClan will welcome you back?"

"I'll take my chances."

"O-Okay, I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you, too."

Evening Drop got out of her nest and padded out of the tunnel.

Shadow Leaves felt his heart shatter into a million pieces as the pale brown-patched she-cat disappeared.

Chapter 13

Holly Leaves decided that she wanted to follow Autumn Leaves to the forest because her sister's love to the ThunderClan tom was too deep and they would get caught some time. Autumn Leaves seemed different than usually, she seemed... dazed. Why was this? Was she about to leave Mousewhisker?

"Good to see you," Autumn Leaves mewed cheerily.

"It's good to see you, too," Mousewhisker replied. "I got distracted while I was hunting – I was thinking about you again – I missed a really easy catch. And Thornclaw said I had less sense than a newborn kit!"

"I have to tell you something, Mousewhisker."

"What is it? Are you leaving me?"

"No---"

"I can be better, Autumn Leaves! You don't have to leave me!"

"I'm not---"

"I'm sorry! I can do better if you don't leave me..."

"Mousewhisker, be quiet! I'm not leaving you, I'm expecting your kits, you mouse-brain!"

What? How can that be?

"Really?" Mousewhisker echoed. "That's great! So you're coming to live in ThunderClan with me?"

"What? No, of course not!" Autumn Leaves replied rudely.

"Why not? I'm sure Bramblestar would welcome you."

"No, Evening Drop has already left TunnelClan. I'm staying in TunnelClan."

"But our kits---"

"Our kits can be raised without one parent, just so long as I nurture then like two."

"So, you're leaving me."

"No, no, I still love you but I can't live on the surface."

"So you want to live in those dark, damp tunnels forever?"

"Yes."

"I can't believe you."

Autumn Leaves gasped. "I can't believe you!"

Holly Leaves couldn't take it anymore, she jumped out of the bush.

"Would you just shut up?" she hissed. "I can't believe either of you, sneaking out of the camps to see each other but at one disagreement, you're arguing like kits!"

"He stared it when he called the tunnels dark and damp!" Autumn Leaves dobbed on Mousewhisker.

"Don't be a tattle tail, Autumn Leaves!"

Autumn Leaves opened her mouth but nothing came out, she stopped back into the tunnels.

"Mousewhisker, I think it's time you left," Holly Leaves mewed. "I'll have a word with her."

"You do that," Mousewhisker replied bluntly before leaving.

Holly Leave padded back into the tunnels after Autumn Leaves.

Chapter 14

Autumn Leaves waited at the exit of the tunnels for Holly Leaves, then she looked at her belly. The ginger-and-black patched she-cat's belly didn't seem swelled up like Heart Willow's when she was expecting... was it because the kits were just forming? Holly Leaves padded in.

"You chose pretty badly," Holly Leaves muttered.

"Don't tell me how I chose!" Autumn Leaves hissed. "I thought he'd come to TunnelClan when I was expecting his kits!"

"Are you sure you love him?"

"Yes, I love him. Mousewhisker's smart and kind and handsome."

"I can't help you, Autumn Leaves. You have to live with it."

"I thought he loved me enough to leave his Clan and join my Clan..."

"Well, he doesn't. Or he loves you so much that he thinks he's better off staying in ThunderClan and that you should join him."

"I love him... I love him so much. But my Clan is more important, if Mousewhisker wants to stay in ThunderClan. That's his choice but I'm staying in TunnelClan!"

"Okay," Holly Leaves replied. "Does Fallen Path know you are expecting kits?"

"I was in such a rush to get to the forest. No," Autumn Leaves meowed.

"We'll tell him that you are but nothing about Mousewhisker."

"Okay, Holly Leaves, you're a good sister. I'm glad I have you."

"I'm sure you'd do the same for me."

"Always."

. . .

"Shadow Leaves, when will Autumn Leaves' kits be born?" Fallen Path asked his medicine son.

"They won't be born for around four to five moons," Shadow Leaves reported.

"Autumn Leaves, you can continue your sharpclaw duties until your belly is swollen or you get too tired."

"Thank you, Father," Autumn Leaves replied.

"Shadow Leaves, as next in line to be leader, you will organise the patrols."

Shadow Leaves dipped his head. "Of course, Father," he faced the Clan. "Ginger River and Holly Leaves, you will go hunt while Autumn Leaves goes to check the WindClan tunnel for visitors." There was a hint of sadness in his voice. "Then bring them here. But if they aren't visitors and are lost, drive them out of the tunnel."

Chapter 15

Shadow Leaves picked up some borage leaves from the pile and carried them over to Heart Willow so she'd have enough milk to feed Cloudy Storm.

"Cloudy Storm is very heathy," Shadow Leaves commented.

"I know," Heart Willow replied.

"Of course I'm heathy!" Cloudy Storm yelled. "And I'm strong too, look! I can pick up this stick!"

Cloudy Storm picked up the small twig in his tiny jaws.

"You'll be a great sharpclaw," Shadow Leaves mewed.

"I *know*!" Cloudy Storm growled. "Of course I'll be, I'm not *stupid*!"

"I never said you were stupid. I was just complementing you."

"I don't need complements when I'm the best!"

"Cloudy Storm, don't talk to Shadow Leaves like that," Heart Willow scolded. "He's the medicine cat and next in line to become leader."

"So, I can't be leader?"

"No."

"Why?!?"

"Because you are becoming a sharpclaw."

"Then I'll become a medicine cat, then I'll become leader!"

"It doesn't work like that, Cloudy Storm. You don't have the heart to be medicine cat."

"How do you know?"

"I'm your mother, mothers always know best."

Shadow Leaves pawed at the borage leaves. "You need to eat the borage, Heart Willow," he cut in. "You need lots of milk for Cloudy Storm to grow big and strong."

"Sure, Shadow Leaves," Heart Willow gulped down the borage. "It tastes bitter but I just want my kit to grow big and strong."

Shadow Leaves dipped his head before walking back to the piles of herbs. He wished that Cloudy Storm would become a medicine cat, then the black-patched tom could quit being a medicine cat as soon as Cloudy Storm was done training. Then Evening Drop could come back. Shadow Leaves' heart soared at the thought of the pale brown-patched she-cat coming through the WindClan tunnel to him.

But she can't... Shadow Leaves thought.

. . .

Evening Drop padded into WindClan's territory, when she had left TunnelClan – she didn't go straight back to WindClan. Instead she lived in the Twoleg barn for a while but now she thought was the right time to come back to WindClan.

"Hey!" Evening Drop recognised her father's voice. "Evening... Drop?"

"Hello, Pigeonwing," Evening Drop replied.

"Why are you here? Fallen Path had said you'd come back to WindClan but you didn't."

"I went to the Twoleg barn for a while. I've decided that the open moor is my home and I never should have left." Saying those words made her heart shatter but she hid her sorrow.

"I'll take you to Onestar but it's his final decision, if he declines. Go back to TunnelClan."

Once they were back in WindClan camp, Onestar came forward.

"Where have you been, Eveningpaw?" he demanded. "Tunnelrunner and Hollyfeather are warriors now, you would've been one if you hadn't of run away those moons ago."

"I ran away," Evening Drop admitted. "I didn't feel at home, I gave myself the new name of Evening Drop. After all those moons, I've finally realised that the open moor of WindClan is my home." She bowed her head. "If you allow me too, I'll remain loyal to WindClan."

"Evening... Drop, I have seen this before in Crowfeather. I forgave him and I am willing to forgive you too, you will be a warrior but you are to do the elders' bedding for a moon."

"Yes, Onestar. I promise to do that."

"Eveningpaw, you are now Eveningdrop!"

Chapter 16

Holly Leaves carried a fat squirrel in her jaws back to cavern-camp, Ginger River followed her with two mice. Autumn Leaves was waiting for her.

"What do you want, Autumn Leaves?" Holly Leaves asked.

"I'm going to find Mousewhisker and apologise," Autumn Leaves replied.

"Why? If anything *he* should be apologising to *you*. Toms are mouse-brains, always full of themselves."

"I want to make up with Mousewhisker before our kits are born."

"Why are you telling me?"

"Come with me to find him."

"But... but..." Holly Leaves saw something in Autumn Leaves' eyes. "Fine."

"Thank you."

. . .

The two sister headed out into the forest, following what was left of Mousewhisker's stale scent, it seemed to be heading for the ThunderClan camp but then turned to the tunnels again... and it seemed to be getting fresher. Then that came back to the tunnel entrance, Mousewhisker was waiting there!

"Mousewhisker!" Autumn Leaves called out, running towards her mate.

"Autumn Leaves!" Mousewhisker was delighted to see Autumn Leaves again.

When the black-and-ginger patched she-cat was up to the grey-and-white tom, she nosed him.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"For what?" Mousewhisker asked.

"For yelling at you, stupid furball."

"Well, *I'm* sorry for yelling at *you*."

"Are we still mates?"

"We always were, even if we have to live in different Clans. But can you get the kits to visit me?"

Holly Leaves held her breath to what Autumn Leaves was about to say. If she said yes, the kits wouldn't feel true loyalty to TunnelClan and might leave for ThunderClan. If she said no, she and Mousewhisker could get into another agreement.

"No, I'm sorry, Mousewhisker," Autumn Leaves meowed. "I'll tell them about you when they're ready."

Mousewhisker was about to snap a retort but then nodded. "Okay, I see that," he agreed. "But visit me and tell me about them all the time. Okay?"

"Of course!"

"I love you."

"I love you too, Mousewhisker."

Chapter 17

Autumn Leaves felt a pain in her belly, her unborn kits were getting slightly bigger as the days passed. She knew that her WindClan family was visiting soon, Autumn Leaves couldn't wait to share the news with them! Fallen Path was very worried about the unborn kits, saying that Autumn Leaves' belly should be swollen-up by now.

"Unborn kits take a while to form," Shadow Leaves had said. "Autumn Leaves has only been expecting for around four weeks. And stop panicking, I'm running out of thyme to give you."

Autumn Leaves waited excitedly as she saw the shape of Pigeonwing appearing. Then Echodawn behind him but no cat else.

"Where are your kits?" Autumn Leaves asked.

"They're warriors now," Pigeonwing replied. "They have important duties now."

"Doesn't mean they can't come."

"They didn't want to," Echodawn mewed. "Eveningdrop was too ashamed to come, Tunnelrunner was teaching apprentices how to keep quiet and run fast and Hollyfeather is... I don't know what she's doing."

"Well, I have great news! I'm expecting kits!"

"Congratulations, we'll tell our kits when we get home," Pigeonwing meowed.

"Whose are they?" Echodawn pressed.

"She doesn't have to tell us. We have to go now, anyway."

Echodawn and Pigeonwing padded away. Autumn Leaves went to Shadow Leaves for some herbs. Shadow Leaves gave her some bitter borage.

"Don't you have something make it taste better?" Autumn Leaves asked.

"I don't have any heather nectar on me," Shadow Leaves replied.

"Fine, but they taste very bitter."

"It is for the best of your kits, so they grow with lots of milk."

"I know, I heart you telling Heart Willow the other day."

Autumn Leaves gulped down the herbs then drank some water from the drinking pool.

"Very, very bitter," Autumn Leaves muttered. "Please get heather nectar soon."

"I will," Shadow Leaves promised. "But I can't until tomorrow."

"Fine."

Chapter 18

Shadow Leaves sighed as he padded into the open moor to get heather nectar for Autumn Leaves' 'bitter borage' as she called it. The black-patched tom hoped that he would run into Evening Drop but at the same time he didn't. Shadow Leaves wanted to see Evening Drop because he loved her but he didn't want to see her because when she left, his heart would break again. Shadow Leaves picked some heather nectar and, lucky for him, no WindClan cats were around.

. . .

When Shadow Leaves returned he wrapped cobwebs around Ginger River's paw because he had cut in on a stone.

"I taught you well," Ginger River murmured.

Not well enough, Shadow Leaves thought but didn't say out loud. *You never taught me how to not love.*

"I'm glad you were my apprentice," Ginger River mewed. "You have the true heart of a medicine cat. I couldn't ask for a better apprentice."

Maybe you would have been a better mentor if you didn't abandoned *your duties for love*, Shadow Leaves snapped in his head. *I was going to do that too but it isn't the same!*

Shadow Leaves sent Ginger River to his nest to rest and Ginger River did so. Shadow Leaves sighed as he gave his pregnant sister a piece of prey with the 'bitter borage' and heather nectar in it. Autumn Leaves ate it and said it tasted much better than yesterday's herbs.

"I need to check you every day, Autumn Leaves," Shadow Leaves instructed. "And don't eat anything bad."

"I *know*, Shadow Leaves," Autumn Leaves retorted. "I know you're medicine cat but you don't need to be so bossy!"

"It's my job, and I can't change it." *Nope, I can't but I wish I could.*

Chapter 19

"They're coming! My kits are coming!" Autumn Leaves howled, making Holly Leaves jump out of his nest. "Shadow Leaves, hurry!"

Holly Leaves rushed over as well, she needed to watch the birth of her sister's kits.

"Stay calm, Autumn Leaves," Shadow Leaves meowed. "The first step is staying calm."

"Okay, okay!" Autumn Leaves gasped for breath. "I'm calming down."

"Good, now eat the juniper berries and push!"

Holly Leaves watched her sister eat the purple berries. The ginger-patched she-cat was worried for her sister.

"I can see the first kit," Holly Leaves told Shadow Leaves.

"Holly Leaves, go find a stick for Autumn Leaves to bite on," Shadow Leaves ordered.

"Sure."

Holly Leaves raced off into the tunnels to find a stick.

. . .

Holly Leaves returned with the stick in her jaws, Autumn Leaves was still having her first kit.

"Why isn't the kit coming out?" Holly Leaves asked.

"It's taking its time," Shadow Leaves replied. "Come on, Autumn Leaves, you can do it. After this one, there'll only be one more."

"I'm... I'm trying!" Autumn Leaves gasped for breath. "I didn't know

it would hurt this much!"

"It'll get easier!"

"I hope you or all claw your--- Ow!"

"It's coming, Holly Leaves, after I releases it after biting the sac. I'm giving it to you!"

"Um... okay?" Holly Leaves echoed.

Holly Leaves didn't know what to do when she had the kit, the ginger-patched she-cat stared at it blankly after it was placed in front of her.

"You're meant to lick it!" Shadow Leaves growled.

"Oh, sorry!" Holly Leaves apologised and began to lick the kit.

"You can do it, Autumn Leaves, only one more!"

"I... I... can't!" Autumn Leaves cried.

"Yes, you can!"

"No, I can't. It hurts too much!"

"Think of the cats you love and it will be easier!"

Holly Leaves knew that her sister would be thinking of their father, their mother, her, their brother and maybe their WindClan family. *And Mousewhisker*, the thought popped into Holly Leaves' mind. *Why would she? I know he's her mate but he's in ThunderClan...*

Chapter 20

Shadow Leaves panicked. *You're a medicine cat!* He told himself. *You shouldn't be panicking, you're trained for this!*

"It's working!" Holly Leaves mewed. "The kit is coming out faster."

"Continue, Autumn Leaves," Shadow Leaves urged. "Continue thinking of the cats you love, and your kits!"

"Okay! Okay!" Autumn Leaves gasped for air again.

"What's going on?" Fallen Path shrieked, coming into the tunnel with Ginger River and Holly Fall.

"About time you showed up!" Heart Willow retorted. "Your daughter is having her kits!"

"What? What? I..." Fallen Path didn't say anymore, as he fainted.

Holly Fall raced up to Autumn Leaves.

"My daughter, I'm here!" she mewed. "Everything is going to be okay!"

"I know, we're almost... done," Autumn Leaves replied. "I... think!"

"We are," Shadow Leaves assured his mother. "We are almost done. The last kit is almost out, Autumn Leaves, you can do it!"

"I... know!"

Once the kit was out, Shadow Leaves bit the sac to releases it. He slid it to his mother and she began to lick it.

"This reminds me of when I had you three," Holly Fall scolded while licking the kit. "You were so cute when you were tiny!"

"Mother!" Holly Leaves groaned.

Shadow Leaves watched as Autumn Leaves maintained her strength to sit up and look at her kits. Shadow Leaves looked at the kits himself, the first one was a grey tom-kit with white underbelly, paws and black patches. The second one was a white she-kit with grey underbelly, paws and black patches.

"What are you going to name them?" Holly Fall asked.

Chapter 21

Autumn Leaves looked at her children again, they both looked like her and Mousewhisker combined. They had to have 'Leaves' in their names but they also had to have part of Mousewhisker's name in there... maybe Mouse Leaves for the tom-kit... but what about the she-kit? If she had Mouse Leaves for the she-kit, what would she name the tom-kit? Then she noticed that the she-kit had very long whiskers....

"I'm not sure what I should name them," Autumn Leaves admitted.

"I think that the tom could be White Belly and the she-kit would be Grey Belly," Holly Fall replied.

"But it is your decision," Shadow Leaves mewed.

Autumn Leaves thought that White Belly and Grey Belly was stupid. The patches always looked like leaves. 'Leaves' needed to be in their names! But so did part of Mousewhisker's...

"The tom-kit is Mouse Leaves," Autumn Leaves decided. "And the she-kit is Whiskery Leaves."

"Great names," Holly Leaves gritted through her teeth.

"Indeed," Holly Fall agreed.

"They will be heathy kits," Shadow Leaves commented. "Just so long as you continue eating borage so you can give them milk."

"Just so long you keep getting heather nectar for the 'bitter borage'."

"Sure," Shadow Leaves rolled his eyes.

"Hey! I saw that, Shadow Leaves. Don't ignore me!"

"I wasn't."

"Toms!" Holly Leaves muttered.

"I heard that, Holly Leaves!" Shadow Leaves mewed.

"Wha? What 'appened?" every cat turned to see Fallen Path waking up.

"My kits were born," Autumn Leaves reported.

"Can I see them?"

"Of course, you're my father."

Fallen Path padded forward and looked at the kits.

"They're beautiful!" he mewed. "Have you named them?"

"I just did."

"What are they named?"

"The tom-kit is Mouse Leaves."

"Okay."

"And the she-kit is Whiskery Leaves."

Fallen Path blinked. "I can see that she has long whiskers," he commented.

"I know."

I wish Mousewhisker was here to see his children... Autumn Leaves thought. *But he can't be...*

Epilogue

Eveningdrop padded into Kestrelflight's den, her belly was swollen up. Did she have an infection?

"Hello, Eveningdrop," Kestrelflight mewed. "Why're you here this fine night?"

"I feel strange, my belly hurts often and I mess up when I'm chasing prey," Eveningdrop admitted. "Why am I like this? What's wrong with me?"

"I'll gladly check you but I have an idea of what it might be right now."

Kestrelflight checked Eveningdrop's breathing, her eyes, her ears and her fur for ticks.

But all the symptoms of the swollen belly, the often tiredness and the pains in her belly led in one simple direction.

"Is there something wrong with me?" Eveningdrop asked.

"No, no, Eveningdrop," Kestrelflight replied. "Nothing like that. I must say that I'm surprised your mother hasn't noticed!"

"So? What is it? Tell me!"

"Eveningdrop, you're expecting kits. You're going to be a mother."

What? I can't be! It was so long ago that I left TunnelClan. Oh, Shadow Leaves! If any cat finds out we're in deep, deep trouble!

These kits would never know their father, is made Eveningdrop very, very nervous...